

STONE STATE NEWS CONDENSED.

SHOT DEAD AT A DANCE.

Sign Miners Mark Their Celebration with One Murder. Festivities Went On.

The Hun and Slaves of Lomont, a mining village north of Uniontown, celebrated three days, two christenings, a birth, one funeral and general pay day Sunday.

Twelve houses belonging to the George Sanger Coal company, were consumed by fire on Sunday night.

John Haag, aged 55, at New Castle, on the night of the 21st, had plotted to kill his father-in-law, Mrs. Haag.

About 200 representative citizens of Sharon met in council chambers and listened to speeches and adopted resolutions.

The works of the Altoona Foundry and Machine company are to be raised, the machinery sold and the ground used for building purposes.

Prothonotary Joseph W. Loomis, of North East county, died suddenly in the court room on rheumatism of the heart.

The Republicans of Jeannette nominated M. Jones for justice of the peace and A. C. Coon for constable.

Ex-Judge Mohard, of Pittsburg, attorney for the Nimitz estate, has brought suit against the latter for half the debts of the firm of Nimitz & Co.

The Armstrong County Bar Association elected Ross Reynolds, president; Augustus Park, vice president; W. L. Fert, secretary; and E. Whitworth, treasurer.

While Messrs. Sheets and Baker, of near Ironsburg, were returning from church Sunday, a falling tree crushed their sled, killing Sheets and injuring two of his children.

Dr. James E. Howard, of Venetia, Washington county, has written to Washington asking that admission to the army of insurgents in Cuba as a regimental surgeon be granted him.

The Fayette county commissioners have levied the millage at 5 mills on a valuation of \$3,500,000, making the tax \$163,000.

The audit of the accounts of Washington county for 1895 shows that \$49,531 was paid for the support of the indigent and criminal classes.

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Frederick McConnell's residence at New Castle was burned during the absence of the family by a spark from a grate.

The faculty of the Allegheny college rejected the 24 students accused of disorderly conduct on the grounds on Tuesday night.

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SELECT RELIGIOUS READING.

RESIGNING A NEW YEAR.

The old and time-honored way of beginning a New Year was to sit down and catalogue all one's sins, and then for each blotted page of life turn over a new leaf, write on its margin.

"Henceforth shall none but pure and virtuous deeds be here recorded."

A sincere and commendable resolve in every case, no doubt, but how seldom adhered to amid the stress of unceasing temptation and the burden of long established habit!

And why not? Is not the earnest, serious way a good way to begin a reform? No; it is a splendid way, as a rule, of the weaker moral value. They are simply the expression of a strong emotional tendency or purpose.

We all know how little vows are trusted or esteemed in practical affairs. A man vows he will pay you one hundred dollars, which he has borrowed, in three months time. Do you go away satisfied? Hardly.

You exhort from him a written and signed statement that he will pay the money, and then you feel safe for he has allowed you to put the nose of the law about his throat and to the shame of human nature he said that this sort seems to be the only binding agreement between man and man.

No, the vow is always superficial. It does not go deep enough. It does not sufficiently compel and involve. A man may promise with the most earnest and sincere good-will, yet when the time comes, his vow may slip like a reed. And as the strength of his promise to others, so is it apt to be to himself—indeed, it will be even weaker to himself, as a rule, because he does not stand in such wholesome fear of the weak creature he knows himself to be.

The old way of beginning a New Year, then—the vow and leaf-turning way—is a mere convention and pleasantry. Most of us show the degree to which we esteem it by the light way we speak of it. When about to violate it is good as far as it goes, but unfortunately it does not express a resolve to "break off," to change one's habit, to do the right thing hitherto undone, and leave undone the wrong thing hitherto done, is practically very little ethical reform.

Satan wishes a million such fallen resolves beneath his feet, as the November wind rustles the green corn of the spring. Few lives are reformed by these means.

Why, then, is this strong moral and ethical beginning? In what way may we righteously, and with some measure of confidence, enter upon the personal life of a New Year?

First, by taking heart of courage from the victories and achievements of the year that is past. "Nothing succeeds like success," is a proverb that is a good deal more than half true. The accumulative power of either good or evil is tremendous. If you have gained any victory over yourself during the year, or accomplished any distinctly good work, or attained at any high spiritual experience, it should be a tower of strength for you in the year to come. Take the moral impetus of every good thought or word, or deed, in your past life to help you on your heavenward way in the year to come. There are courage and strength in the memory of past achievements. Think on them!

Then, again, you shall begin your New Year well, if you pray God to help you make it a better year than last. A prayer is distinctly different from a vow. It is a humbler, less self-reliant function. When you vow to do something, you undertake to do it to a large degree at any rate—upon yourself. But when you pray, you appeal to God to be the source of your strength and the sustainer of your endeavor. A vow implies confidence; a prayer implies humility. It is infinitely better to go in prayer, saying, "God help me," than to go saying, "I will!" God can make your New Year blessed and fruitful. He will, if you ask Him. But there is little in the spirit of the vow that is not also a prayer, which His omnipotence will sustain.

Finally, to begin a New Year well, begin it by immediate righteousness. Do not wait until the second of January to do any good thing. Do it the first thing in the morning of the first days of the year. The contemplating, lazy piety that devotes even a day to the luxury of imagining, with its little hectic or vital energy to accomplish anything important, though the centuries of God were here. The man who really means to be a better Christian in 1896 than in 1895 will certainly not let the New Year slip away without doing something to that effect.

Rejoice—pray—work! These are the three good ways to begin the New Year. Don't sit down to make vows, and don't start a journal to prove how imperfectly you will keep them. Just emphasize the good that has always been in your life, and begin the good work of the New Year as promptly as the sun begins his. If you follow these directions, you will not be called upon to shed any tears over the turned leaf which the wind of the world blew back again.

THE OPEN DOOR.

The opening door of 1896 means to us new and enlarged opportunity. We can try to do and possibly under better conditions. It is as though we were set back to retrace our course and do the work afresh. Our mistakes may be mended, our faults repaired, and our tasks completed. If, in the past, we have lacked earnestness, devotion, and fitness for duty, we may, in renewing the work of the year, add to our personal equipment and qualification. There are those who have had plans too large to be wrought out during the past twelve months—plans, it may be, which must cover several years. To such this opening year must be a great resource, a great gift of God, as it may allow them to leave the capstone to its place in the finished building. But there are beneficent plans yet unundertaken. To such people the new year opens a fresh opportunity. Though unproductive in the past, there is another year added. Of occasions neglected you may now avail yourself; of new time so bountifully accorded is to be recognized as one of God's best gifts to man. With time added, every good is possible to us; without it, we pass beyond the range of hope and help.

The opening door of 1896 means renewed devotion to the divine and work of life. The opportunity has come; it is before you. What shall it be to you? It will be precisely what you elect. There are thousands who will pass it by as a matter of no importance, and will find themselves at the close of the year no better than at the beginning; but there are those who will recognize the importance of the hour and will avail themselves of its utmost advantages. They will not only get ready; they will engage at once in the work. There are many people who intend to do a good thing but really never get ready. Death finds them in a state of suspended animation. Their desire to get ready has been in their way. The only thing for a good man to do is to thrust in the sickle and begin the harvest; readiness comes best in the field. The agriculturist, the machinist, never waits to prepare; he prepares in doing.

Your good resolutions are all right. Put yourself in right relations with yourself, with God, and with the world around you. Repent of any sins of which you have been guilty, and abandon them; devote yourself to the service of God and humanity. Live no longer unto yourself or to the world; live for the high purposes for which you were created and redeemed. Preparation is well; but all this may be made without forwarding you in the highway of holiness. You have often resolved without performing. That you may not repeat the old mistakes, begin this very day to execute your purpose. Enter on the proper lines of duty at once and continue steadily at the work each day to the end. Begin, advance, and complete your task! One today is worth two tomorrows.

PRESENT AND FUTURE.

We can shape our present, and thereby create a future. We can cry to God for the touch of a new life in our present. What we refuse to do in each day as it comes, will never be done for us in the future. And so the question comes to us at the opening of a new year: What are we doing with ourselves? How are we spending the present? One of two things must be done. We must continue in the same course, or change. To refuse to forsake evil becomes a deliberate resolution to do evil, and to continue in main neutral. In matters relating to time indecision is decision. Some discouraged soul may exclaim: "Ah, I have no future! The Almighty hath hedged me about. Lover and friend He has removed. I sit solitary. I am heavy. I am weak, and have no strength nor courage for struggles." And yet there is a noble resolution such can make, and that is to keep on with patience and faith. Though you are discouraged, God is not. He will be done for us in the future. 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